

Amendments to the Specification

Please replace the title of the patent application with the following amended title
~~SEMICONDUCTOR DEVICES AND METHODS OF FABRICATING THE SAME~~
METHODS TO REDUCE STRESS ON A METAL INTERCONNECT

Please replace paragraph [0003] with the following amended paragraph:

[0003] In the prior art, the passivation layer has, in some instances, been fabricated by depositing a Plasma Enhanced-Tetra-Ethyl-Ortho-Silicate (PE-TEOS) oxide layer using a Plasma Enhanced Chemical Vapor Deposition (PECVD) on a semiconductor substrate on which an uppermost metal interconnect for the semiconductor device has been formed, and subsequently depositing a SiH_4 nitride layer using PECVD. Also, the passivation layer has been fabricated by depositing a SiH_4 oxide layer using a high density plasma Chemical Vapor Deposition (HDPCVD) process and subsequently ~~depositing a~~ depositing a SiH_4 nitride layer using PECVD.

Please replace paragraph [0012] with the following amended paragraph:

[0012] The aluminum oxide layer 105 is a kind of Al_xO_y layer formed on the aluminum layer 104. The ~~Al_xO_y~~ Al_xO_y layer is formed by performing a plasma treatment to the aluminum layer 104 using N_2O or O_2 gas and annealing the treated layer in an atmosphere of inert gas, such as Ar or He, or of gas, such as N_2O , O_2 , N_2 or H_2 , etc. at a low temperature of, for example, 200 to 400. for 10 to 100 minutes.

Please replace paragraph [0020] with the following amended paragraph:

[0020] Since the stress-relief layer 105 has a high hardness characteristic and a low stress susceptibility relative to the metal interconnects 102, the ~~stress-relief~~ stress-relief layer 105 serves to relieve stress for the metal interconnects 102. Formation of the stress-relief layer 105 prevents cracking during a subsequent packaging process, so that leakage current of the semiconductor device may be reduced and the breakdown voltage thereof may be increased.